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A Spider in the Attic

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A Spider in the Attic

By: Mara Bahmer

People try to tell me that my anxiety is all in my head
They say words they think are comforting:
 “You’ve done all you can do”
 “Stop worrying, it’s doing you no good”
 I smile politely, but inside I scream
 They don’t know what it’s like
 When my inner thoughts
 That tell me I am nothing
 That tell me I am doomed to fail
 Drown out every other murmuring
 Even drown out the noise around me
The television, the empty chatter of a crowded room
 Even the music blasting out of my headphones
I have tried everything to chase my anxiety away
 Medicines, meditations, pointless distractions
 Sometimes I clean the entire house
I vacuum the carpet, the rugs, even the cobwebs
 In the corners of the ceiling
To pull my attention away from my own cobwebs
The cobwebs that my anxiety, a poisonous arachnid
 Weaves inside my head
The cobwebs cloud my memory so that all I can recall
 Are the bad days, the days where the spider
 Skitters over the surface of my brain
 Making every muscle twitch
 As a child I was never afraid of monsters
 Maybe because a part of me knew that the beast
 Slowly growing inside me
 Was the most fearsome monster of all
During panic attacks, the spider takes an endless loop
 Between my head and my lungs
 Every worry he weaves connects to my windpipe
Clogging it further and further until I begin to suffocate
 Every breath I manage to choke down
Is accompanied by cobwebs, so that the worries accumulate
 Within my chest as well as my mind

Sometimes I awake from nightmares with a tightness in my throat
And I can tell that even as I sleep the spider is at work
Continuing to weave his wicked tapestry
People say that my anxiety is all in my head
In a way they are right
He resides there, yes, but I did not conjure him
He is a parasite, an uninvited resident in the attic of my body
I can't stop worrying in the face of his constant nagging
A constant pressure building in my cranium
I can't stop worrying
So stop telling me to